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Sustainable wood use, decarbonisation of energetic metabolism and forest development

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RESEARCH AIMS

- IDENTIFY COMMON MECHANISMS OF TOXIC POLLUTION FROM ATMOSPHERIC BURNERS, COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL
- QUESTION THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CO₂-CREDITS FOR BURNING STEM WOOD PRODUCTS
- SENSITISE FOR CHOICES AHEAD IN FOREST MANAGEMENT
- ENVISION COMPREHENSIVE DE-CARBONISATION OF ENERGETIC METABOLISM

AIR POLLUTION IN DENMARK

Wood stove emissions cause local health hazards being a mixture of:

- 90% of national total of PAH (carcinogenic)
- 60% of primary particles (PM_{2,5})
- 50% of dioxins (activate carcinogens)

For diluting 1 m³ contaminated air to urban background

- 7 x 10⁵ m³ fresh air needed re. PAH
- 5 x 10⁶ m³ “ “ “ re. PM_{2,5}

- impossible with low chimneys in dense neighbourhoods
- end-of-pipe-solution: particle FILTERS
they are, however, NOT designed for dioxins

Dioxins (PCDD/PCDF) emissions:

Limit value for high rise (!) chimneys: 0,1 ng pr. m³

CO₂-INDULGENCE versus POPs CONVENTION

DANISH REPORT to Stockholm Convention (2006) on dioxins:

“Total emissions could be reduced with a ban on burning biomass in small installations without flue gas purification ...“ YET: „...such an initiative could have undesirable effects in the context of the goals to reduce total CO₂ emissions.“
The Ministry, thus, accepts 50% of Danish dioxin emissions giving climate indulgence for substituting fossil fuels by tree.

In reality, substituting wood e.g. for natural gas means CO₂-emissions GO UP 79% !

DANISH LAW on CO₂-quotas:

“Biomass: Fuels, which according to Annex 1 have a CO₂-emission factor of ZERO”

Annex 1 shows figures with DELETED emission factors for ALL biomass fuels:

FUEL	Real CO ₂ (kg/GJ)	Law CO ₂ (kg/GJ)
Coal	95,0	95,0
Gas oil	74,0	74,0
Natural gas	56,9	56,9
STRAW	102,0	0,0
WOOD	102,0	0,0

Only by fast rotation in agriculture, however, the amount of CO₂ emitted is re-bound in a time certain (from year to year)

LAND AND WOOD USE PROPORTIONS

1990 to 2005: Energetic use of harvested wood products doubled in Denmark
Planned: another doubling to 2030 !

The political aim of doubling forest area in a tree generation (as against 1989), is, however, out of sight. Only 11-12% of land area are today covered by forests

So, Denmark increasingly imports tree for use in domestic heating (40% of Russia's woods are not registered in Kyoto process)

CONCLUSIONS

Defining CO₂-neutral biomass:

Exclude tree species with rotation periods longer than a couple of years;
Carbon dioxide emitted from burning non-fossil plant matter must also be accounted for nationally (full carbon accounting)

Priority be given for implementing the Stockholm Convention on out-phasing persistent organic pollutants (POPs) over promoting wood burning
Wood burning should, rather, be substituted by low- and non-carbon energy procurement e.g. in a hydrogen economy (Sørensen 2005)

WOOD STOVE CHIMNEYS ACT AS DIOXIN REACTORS

Experimental measurements of dioxin

5 kW wood stove

pure, dry wood: birch and beech

6 h burning test with 2 modes of loading

(a) 5 portions à 1,9 kg (normal)

(b) 1 portion à 5 kg ('night' firing)

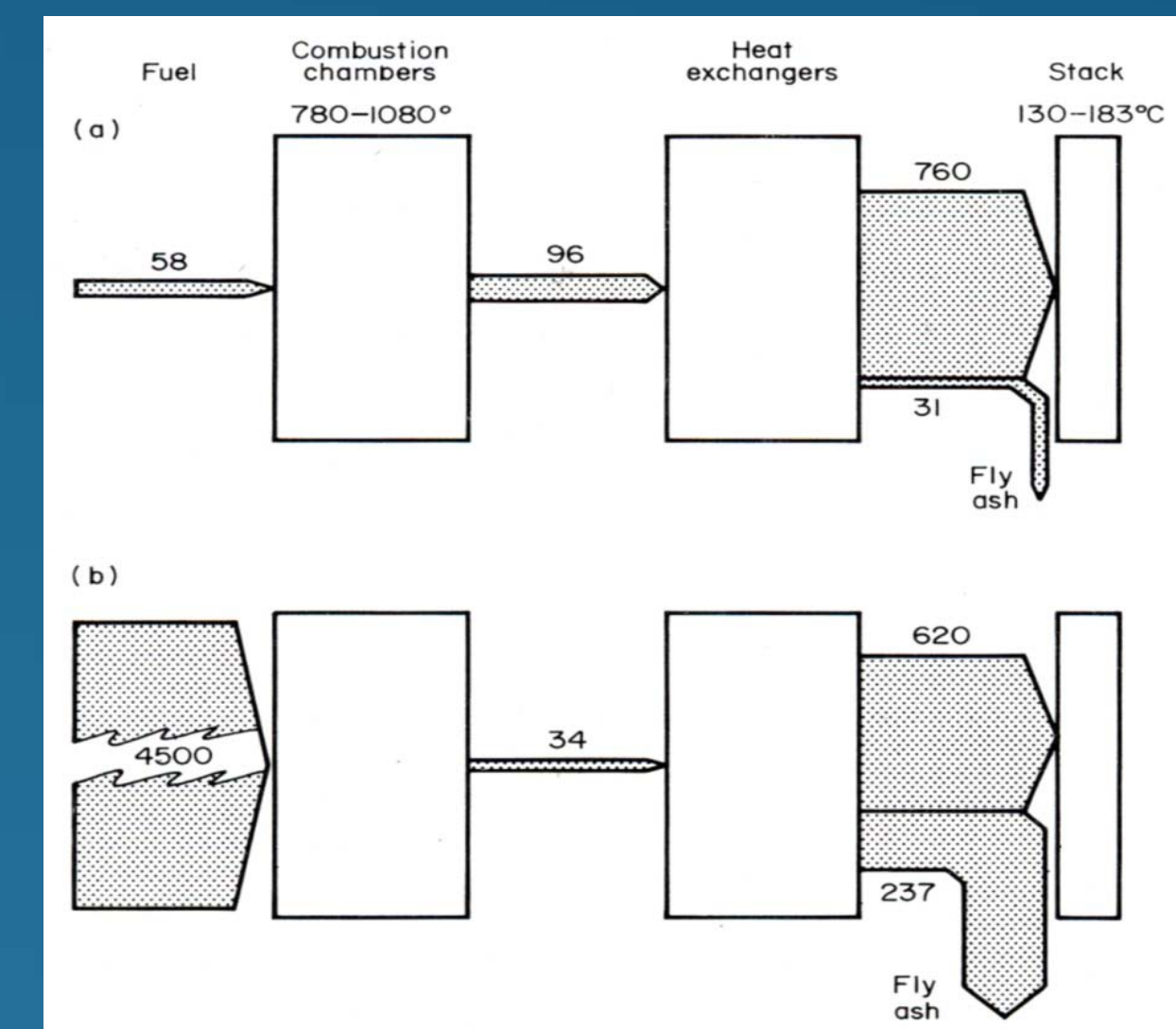
Results: (1) emissions of PCDD/PCDF

1 - 8 times EU limit value for waste incinerators

(2) “Against expectations, night firing (b) shows lesser emissions of dioxin than normal firing (a)”
(Source: Schleicher et al. 2001, p.38)

Same anomaly as in waste incinerators

(Fig. from Commoner 1987)



De-novo-synthesis of dioxin in waste incinerators [µg/h]

NO CLIMATE-NEUTRALITY FOR STEM WOOD BURNING

Physicist Bent Sørensen:

“...The time lag for trees may be decades or centuries, and in such case the temporary carbon dioxide imbalance may contribute to climatic alterations.” (RENEWABLE ENERGY, 3rd.ed., 2004, 483)

When burning stem wood

- a) count the year's rings
- b) calculate, how many trees You have to plant, if the emitted amount of many years' CO₂ binding shall be re-bound within a few years from now!

Are You sure You will be part of the solution – and NOT of the problem?

IPCC 2001:

“Natural processes and management regimes may reduce or increase the amount of carbon stored in pools with turnover times of the order of tens to hundreds of years (living wood, wood products and modified soil organic matter) and thus influence the time evolution of atmospheric CO₂ over the century.”

IPCC 2007: Harvested wood products be used for climate mitigation!

This is also hindered by wood burning because of emissions of black carbon particles with direct warming (Ramanathan et al. 2008).

ENERGETIC OVERUSE versus FOREST SUSTAINABILITY

POTENTIALS OF CONTINUOUS COVER FORESTRY

“The high C stock in semi-natural forests...suggests that more C could be stored by conversion from the traditional forest management system based on clear-cutting and replanting to continuous cover forestry with focus on the maintenance of the dead wood component” (Vesterdal et al. 2007)
2-3 times as much C might be stored by intensified near-natural forest management (Vesterdal in Danish radio)

If forest management is to maximise CO₂-sink functions of forest ecosystems, it should expand strategies of 'near-natural forestry'. These were part of the Danish National Forest Programme of 2002, but are today put into question politically

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